DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 095 811 HE 005 889

AUTHOR Perkins, James A.
TITLE Is the University An Agent for Social Reform? Occasional Paper Number 8.
INSTITUTION International Council for Educational Development, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE Sep 73
NOTE 30p.; Speech presented at the symposium held at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, May 1973. International Council for Educational Development Occasional Paper Number 8

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Change Agents; College Graduates; *Higher Education; *Institutional Role; *Social Change; Speeches; *Universities

ABSTRACT

This paper was delivered to a symposium held by the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, as part of its centennial celebrations in May 1973. The central theme of this paper is that the idea of the university as an effective instrument of social reform has been dangerously exaggerated. This disjunction between expectation and capacity is grounded on a misunderstanding of two modes of the university--the university as a corporate institution and the university as an academic community. The university as a corporate institution is elaborated, then social change, investments, admissions, professional networks, influence of the university, and the influence of the educated man is discussed. The author concludes that the university's greatest instrument for social reform is not its institutional muscle but its graduates who will have appreciated a dedication to careful analysis and precise statement, and that embraces a view of what could be, which is the first prerequisite to social reform. (Author/PG)

ED 095811

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Is the University an Agent for Social Reform?

James A. Perkins

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
International Council for Educational Development
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

HE 005 889

I|C
E|D
International Council for Educational Development
Occasional Paper Number 8

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

International Council for Educational Development
680 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10019

ED 095811

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Is the University an Agent for Social Reform?

James A. Perkins

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This paper was delivered to a symposium held by the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, as part of its centennial celebrations in May 1973. The three papers read to the symposium, together with the prepared commentaries on each, will be included in a book entitled *The University on Trial*, which Whitcoulls Ltd, Christchurch, will distribute toward the end of 1973 on behalf of the University of Canterbury.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Permit me to assert, as a central theme of this paper, that the idea of the university as an effective instrument of social reform has been dangerously exaggerated. Perhaps the success of scientists in conquering time and space has led social scientists and humanists (and even academic administrators!) to the false conclusion that they could, with equal effect, direct the development of man and society. It may be that the public has, therefore, been led to expectations for social salvation that have not been and cannot be fulfilled. The universities that house and advertise these promises have consequently been indicted for nonperformance. Disillusion and disruption have followed, and the university is today in grave danger.

I will also assert that this disjunction between expectation and capacity is grounded on a misunderstanding of two modes of the university—the university as a corporate institution and the university as an academic community. The first mode as the institution has to do with property and power, decision and action, structure and hierarchy, while the second mode as the community has to do with thought and instruction, independence and reflection, standards and values. Since the two modes are inextricably the warp and woof of the university they are, and must be, part of every consideration. The university as agent for social reform must be thought of in the light of the specific and unique nature of the community which is its central raison d'être.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

I will also assert that real influence increases as we move from corporate institutional ways of influencing social reform, through the other less direct means, to the individual as the ultimate revolutionary. It will also be discovered that social reform takes time and while institutions change with their leadership, the individual is here to stay.

Let me state at the outset the organization of this paper, and perhaps if I, like Ariadne, lay out my thread of argument, you, like Theseus, will be able to escape the verbal maze we academics often construct to complicate understanding.

There are five ways in which the university may be involved with social reform. The first is direct action or specific positions taken by the university as a corporate institution. The second is social policy pursued indirectly as a by-product of discharging normal university responsibilities. The third is social change that naturally flows from work of university professionals allied with other professionals. The fourth is the influence for change exercised by the university as a free community constitutionally concerned with what could be rather than what is. Finally, there is the educated university graduate–the most potent of all influences for change.

UNIVERSITY AS A CORPORATE INSTITUTION

Let us turn to the first level of intervention–the university as a corporate entity. It is at this level that expectations have far outrun performance and it is critically important to bring the university as social reformer down to size. To this end there follows a series of observations.

It must be acknowledged that the university has more often been an agent for stability and the status quo than for change and reform. Traditional societies have been careful to

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

see that university education was largely confined to the ruling class. At most it was open to those who would accept the norms and values of the ruling class. And, in any event, the classical content of the curriculum was not such as to foment revolution.

In modern times, also, the university has been looked upon as an agent for stability rather than for change. The responsibility for maintaining and refurbishing the cultural heritage, for adding to the existing body of knowledge preparing for employment, and for living a life for the here and now—all this is essentially conservative.

But the universities do have a more positive role as an agent for reform in those societies in transition from colonial status to national independence or from agricultural to technical-industrial stages. In these cases the university becomes both the symbol and the fact of national cohesion and national identity. Once the transformation has taken place and a new consensus has emerged, the university once again assumes the role of agent for stability and social control, although with a vastly different curriculum more relevant to the current scene. It is no accident that the early colonial university colleges were designed and administered to support the position of the colonial power. Few were established to encourage independence from the founders. It is equally true that once political independence was established the universities were redesigned to help secure that independence. Perhaps the world would have been better off if both colonial powers and the new states viewed the universities as agents for continuing social reform. But there is little evidence that such a larger view was in control.

Having asserted the proposition that the university is at least as conservative as it is revolutionary, we now turn to a second limitation on the university's reputation as an agent for social reform. The university is as much an *object of*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

reform as it is an *instrument for* reform. In other words, the instrument is shaped by the very object it is supposed to affect. It is changed as society changes. Its structure, governance, curriculum are modified to meet society's needs and new priorities. Cause and effect, in these circumstances, are not to be readily determined. Recognizing the reciprocal relationship will, at least, add a certain touch of humility and realism to claims and expectations.

There are some who would deny this interdependence. They would have us believe that the university grows and develops from its own internal dynamics. Societal connection, let alone dependence on society, is, so the argument runs, one of those Philistine ideas dreamed up by those insensitive to the nature and spirit of the intellectual enterprise.

The proposition cannot be taken seriously. Society created the university and there is a continuous interaction to assure that the purposes of society and the missions of the university are always kept in a state of related tension. *Classical education* directly served an elite society dominated by Prince, Bishop and a landed aristocracy. *Liberal education* broadened and modernized the classical heritage to embrace new fields of knowledge of interest and use to the new middle class. *General education* was the pedagogical response to a society looking for a cohesion shattered by two world wars and the increasing fragmentation of knowledge. *Graduate education* arose as the pursuit of knowledge required more extensive and sophisticated arrangements. *Professional education* became necessary as the application of knowledge became as important as its pursuit. And *Academic administration* grew in response to the complex institutional tasks and the need for institutional change that faculties were increasingly unable or unwilling to handle.

But of course we know that the university and society are involved in a close reciprocal relationship. In the long run

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

(and sometimes in the medium run), society gets the university it needs. And at the same time the university instructs society on what society would want if it were wise enough to ask for it. And from this point and counterpoint the university gets less than it wants and society probably gets more than it deserves.

We have now shown that the university is conservator as well as reformer and is influenced as well as influencing. It is becoming positively less dangerous by the minute. It is also becoming more recognizable—and that is helpful. We are now ready for a third observation.

The university is perhaps the least powerful of the many institutions that will inevitably be involved in a social action. This statement contains a major and a minor point. The minor point is the obvious one that social reform requires the participation of many organizations. Consequently, the university can neither claim credit nor accept blame for primary responsibility with respect to any particular action or result.

The major point has to do with the *capacity* of the university as an agent to exercise influence. A recent report from Yale stated the matter gently when it said that "(the university) is not particularly well organized as an institution to render social and moral judgements and to act upon them." That may well be the understatement of the year.

I am told that universities do not always agree among themselves. Perhaps life in New Zealand is different, but frankly I doubt it. Consequently, neither politicians nor the general public have any clear notion as to what the universities have in mind for the general welfare. Those in charge of our political life often complain that the universities sound like a discordant orchestra without a conductor —even on matters close to their own interest—let alone on more general public policy issues.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

And this institutional independence finds its counterpart in the relations between departments, institutes and faculty within the university. At the institutional level the banner of independence spells autonomy while at the professorial level it spells academic freedom. We must remember that the individual professor–teaching his class, writing his book, or minding his test tubes–is the basic building block of the whole academic institutional system which has been designed both to support and to protect these activities. Small wonder that the professor finds independence more important than cooperation, accepts disagreement as a tolerable state of affairs, and resists as hostile and dangerous notions the ideas of the general will and institutional consensus. A professor is, as Carl Becker has said, a person who thinks otherwise.

The university as an institution has at its core a constituency prepared to resist vigorously the very idea of a university position on anything. The professoriat will recoil from the twin strategies of persuasion and compromise so essential to the management of change–let alone reform. The academic can never be an enthusiastic proponent for a statement or cause that is posed as only the best alternative, nor for one in which he only partially believes. Compromise is not part of the classroom ethic, let alone the discipline of scientific research. As Eric Ashby (also a Centennial speaker) will doubtless point out, the academic tradition does not embrace the values necessary for successful institution building.

Direct university intervention into society not only cuts across professional independence and academic style but also cuts across a hard-won social compact that gives freedom and autonomy in return for institutional neutrality. Thus at the institutional level the university has come to know, though it sometimes forgets, that intervention into society is not a one-way street. What is one person's exit is another's entrance. The president or vice chancellor who takes to the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

streets or appears on the barricades may find that he has been followed home. The students who pulled up the paving blocks in Paris had to dodge tear gas in return. The rector who led a protest in one South American country had the army on his campus three days later.

There is another, sometimes neglected, edge to the issue of neutrality. The current pressure on universities to take stands on social issues is premised on the notion that the institution will support the "correct" position. As Fritz Machlup has noted, there is a naive assumption "that academic bodies . . . would always be on the side of the angels and would, by overwhelming majority if not unanimously, give their learned endorsement of resolutions in favor of the true, the good, and the beautiful." Yet, at least under totalitarian regimes, such endorsements if given at all (as they apparently were in Nazi Germany) may support national policies which are the opposite of the good, true and beautiful.

For all these reasons the university in its mode *as an institution* is not likely to be a powerful and effective direct agent for reform. The notion of autonomy precludes any automatic agreement among universities. The doctrine of individual responsibility, protected by the ideas of academic freedom and tenure, precludes the forging of a strong consensus for effective influence and action. And the very nature of learning and the advancement of knowledge is private and inward, not social and outward. So much, then, for direct intervention by the university as a corporate institution.

SOCIAL CHANGE–A UNIVERSITY BY-PRODUCT

We can now move to a more productive avenue of university influence for social change and reform, namely influence that is exerted as a by-product of normal university activity. A

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

university position on apartheid might be difficult to arrange but the establishment of fellowships for South African refugees may be easy to arrange and could be an even stronger signal of university sentiment. A university community can provide considerable elbow room for concerned members to work through established channels.

A controversial and very perplexing issue is whether the university should consider the social policies of the business corporations with which it deals. Should it buy food from producers who pay inadequate wages? Should it purchase the paper of companies that are polluting the rivers? Has it any responsibility for considering matters other than the quality of the service rendered? Should the university use its position as buyer or investor to influence the social policies of private corporations?

Investments

Let us look specifically at the particular case of the investment of endowment funds. While the example may have special reference to the United States, with its unique mixture of public and private funding, endowments are not a monopoly of the United States and the issues involved have their universal application to all aspects of university business relations.

In earlier days security of principal and rate of return were the only relevant considerations bearing on university investment policy. But the surge of social concern for the new priorities of peace, justice and the quality of life have seized the academic community with irresistible force.

There has been no effective answer to the demand by student and professor that their own institution—the university—range itself, where it can, on the side of those who are demanding that social purpose be considered of equal concern to profitability of investment. Needless to say, such considerations as the necessity to maintain maximum income

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

to finance social improvements were and still are largely unexamined.

The difficulties of establishing a direct university position on the advisability of investing in the XYZ company allegedly selling widgets to South Africa or polluting the atmosphere have already been dealt with. Even the most ardent advocate of university pressure would and has recoiled from the prospect of specific decisions arrived at by established faculty procedures which now contain an appropriate measure of student participation. Our young ardent advocate may wish a decision before he graduates but the prospect does not seem promising.

So indirection takes the place of direction by the very simple formula of resolutions that request (or direct) those in charge of investments to accept the principle of applying social criteria along with financial return. The principle once accepted may then be applied in particular cases for or against a particular company without requiring a public vote that would implicate every member of the community. The gentle unstated compromise requires a mixture of social and economic consideration (which makes most financial experts uncomfortable), a private forum where interested parties can press their case, and visible decisions where the community feels that the new priorities have been considered without having to vote on matters about which ignorance and probable opposition make up a substantial fraction of the composite belief.

There are, of course, very difficult problems for the corporations. The right and even the capability of the business corporation to make decisions based on social concerns is a hotly debated issue everywhere. In the past the business corporation has, in the name of social progress, been constrained and forbidden entry into the arena of politics and social controversy. Corporate neutrality has been urged

BEST COPY AVAILABLE
as a way of protecting social invention and social reform from the heavy conservative influence of industrial power.

We are now in the awkward position of asking the business community to forget our earlier strictures. As a result we are loosening the cork of the corporate bottle slowly and with great care. But the pressure for increasing the social responsibility of the corporation is so great that the cork is, in fact, being freed. We can only hope that the genie we release will be small in size, benign in style, and ready to work for the welfare of mankind.

The fact that social behavior is now an accepted consideration in investment policy remains, and the indirect university influence, while difficult to measure, is surely considerable. On any given day hundreds of investment committees, trust offices and insurance companies are discussing the relative merits of companies with respect to their environmental impact. The color of water from a paper mill, the texture of the smoke from a smokestack, the decibel growl of a jet engine are now part of investment concerns along with balance sheets, and balance of power.

Those of you in this audience who may not have direct experience with institutional endowment will not be involved in this test case. The necessity to balance the general and the private interest will be with you, too, but will more probably be resolved in the committee rooms of your government in Wellington. I will not venture to suggest in which arena equity and social justice are more likely to prevail.

Admissions

A more important case of indirect influence that comes closer to the academic heartland is that of admissions or access to higher education. Traditionally, university entrance was and in most countries still is, determined by secondary school exit, but only from those secondary schools which

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

have university preparatory programs. And in many, if not most cases, entrance to proper secondary schools was determined by social standing and ability to pay or by national examinations that reflect social standing and ability to pay. The universities, in the overwhelming majority of cases, had little to do with the selection process. The great exception was and is the private colleges and universities that were established to select and educate their own students.

But the democratic pulse now felt all over the world is changing all this. The drive for literacy has led to a demand for universal primary education, which in turn has forced an expansion of secondary education, which brought, by an inevitable chain of causation, a flood of secondary school graduates with valid and legal credentials for admission to the university. Simple expansion of university places has its limits. Slowly and reluctantly universities have had to enter the process of selection so as to establish limits on size and to help match a great variety of skills and ambitions with the universities' special capabilities.

It is at this critical point that universities are prepared neither in agreed social purpose nor in adequate administrative machinery for handling this new assignment. Admission is not a matter of simply saying yes to some and no to others. There are large considerations that must be taken into account that will help shape the future of our societies. Let me state these considerations in short strokes.

The university finds that it stands at the confluence of three pervasive forces and social requirements. The first is that of our still expanding industrial-technological society with its need for a steady stream of trained manpower. Modern manpower requirements are translated into the need for highly differentiated talents to be found in the general population. Our industrial and industrializing societies have come to look more and more to the universities to admit,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

sort out, and train the various talents required to meet these increasingly sophisticated and specialized needs.

Scientific talent must be identified, encouraged to enter the appropriate disciplines, and educated according to individual's abilities. Those with a more abstract bent must be trained in the theoretical end of the spectrum; those with a more practical turn of mind must be trained in the applied sciences. A random method of selection combined with a lack of concern for manpower requirements can cripple any modern industrial system by not providing the right talent with the right training in the right amounts at the right time. In most countries there is some disjunction between social need and university output; where the disjunction is severe, the effect is damaging not only to the growth of the economy but also to the employment of university graduates. Both dangers are the visible cause of much social unrest and personal anxiety.

The process of selecting, sorting and training this wide variety of talent is a meritocratic response to the needs of a meritocratic society. It is, perhaps, a central characteristic of modern technological and democratic society that it cannot afford to have poorly trained persons in key positions. Being the son of the boss is an insufficient guarantee of competence. And while a diploma from an established university may not be foolproof, it is far more likely to be predictive of success.

It follows that the older elitist principles of selection based on caste and class are out of phase with the educational requirements of the modern world. So admission procedures have shifted from concern with social origin to concern with verbal and mathematical aptitudes and achievements in science and languages. Success in selection could then be measured by the extent to which a round peg would find its appropriate round hole.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

But meritocracy had hardly won the day over elitism when it was challenged from the other end of the spectrum. Job needs remained essentially meritocratic, but the supporting admissions system was challenged by a democratic drive of egalitarianism translated into a worldwide pressure for equal access to the university. This view discounts human differences and finds the origins of unequal talent in unequal social conditions, which are in turn partly traceable to elitist and meritocratic considerations for university entrance. Unequal treatment in the past has led to unequal preparations in the present. The fact that social inequalities and differences in human talent are not in a direct causal relationship is obscured by the emotional rhetoric that supports a determination to achieve social justice through equal access to and even equal representation in the university.

To this pressure and to these considerations the university must also respond in its admissions policies. Whereas meritocratic considerations require close attention to individual aptitudes and achievements, egalitarian considerations require equally close attention to social justice, representation of minority groups, and financial assistance for the less affluent. While a meritocratic policy emphasizes examinations, an egalitarian policy would do away with them altogether. While in a meritocratic system admission to certain programs would be confined to those with visible or at least demonstrable aptitudes, an egalitarian system would insist that students should go where they wish and any deficiencies should be either excused or mitigated by remedial or catch-up work.

As if dealing with and, ideally, resolving these conflicting considerations were not enough, admissions has a third consideration that must be balanced with the first two—namely the matter of academic standards—of no small concern to the university faculty.

Academic standards are a somewhat imprecise measuring

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

rod but a very significant basis for university decision making. And for our purpose here they involve the measurement of student capacity and performance independent of manpower needs and student aspirations. Inflexible recourse to academic standards could blunt both social need and student expectation. Applied to admissions it could both change the allocation of talent and thwart the academic aspirations of the young. And it has done both. The faculty reply is that to debase standards in favor of nonacademic requirements is to be false to the very idea of the university. At the extreme, it will be asserted that standards are standards, and needs and aspirations will just have to take them into account.

It can be imagined that admission policies now involve something more than receiving the secondary school graduation certificate and checking it for errors. The handling of admissions is no neutral mechanical process. If admissions reflect only manpower requirements, meritocracy will be indicted as unjust. If admissions reflect only the egalitarian dictates of social justice, society may stagnate from a great mismatch of talent and needed skills. And if admissions ignore the importance of faculty standards, the education acquired may be a fraud. As one country after another moves from elitist to substantially broadened higher education, the admissions procedure becomes in fact one of the long-run determinants of the extent to which an educated citizenry matches the needs and aspirations of a society.

The university becomes a giant scissors. One blade cuts for meritocratic differentiation while the other cuts for egalitarian similarity. The bolt of the hinge that keeps the blades in place is the bolt of curricular relevance and academic standards. I must leave to my next visit the question as to who has their hands on the scissors themselves, who is cutting our social cloth.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The subject is so important that perhaps a personal footnote is not out of order. When I first came to Cornell University as President in 1963 there were about four black students in each class of about 2,500 entrants. There were some who concluded that black students were not encouraged to enter. This was true. So we encouraged black students to come and provided as best we could the scholarship help required to make this possible. The admissions policy was, in this case, directly influenced and even determined by considerations of social justice, and social justice seemed to be the precondition of future racial stability. No one should be surprised that there was opposition from those primarily concerned with academic standards and academic freedom. There was also opposition from those who believed that we would be training black students for a world in which there would be no job openings for them.

But what was not widely understood was that a change in admissions policy was the key not only to social reform but that it would also help to make the special treatment no longer necessary. Once black students were admitted they graduated with their white classmate with about the same attrition rates. Once graduated, black students found a job market that has made the black graduate of a first-rank university a favored applicant for many jobs. Once employed, they encouraged other black students to apply to universities as an important ladder out of the ghetto. In the intricate chain of connection it became clear that jobs (manpower), curriculum (academic standards), and social aspiration (access to higher education) required balanced judgments at various points and that in the endless chain involved in social progress admissions policy was and is one of the key places at which the various considerations could be advanced and balanced.

Once again it is important to point out that social policy can be influenced indirectly where direct institutional state-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ments would be hard to come by. The university's investment policy can embrace social concerns because it is handled by professionals who, having accepted the principle, are permitted to make specific decisions outside the public arena of debate. Admissions policy makers can balance a concern for racial justice, job opportunity and academic standards because the university community accepts the need for balance but permits a committee of its peers to make individual decisions. Social progress not only requires the vigorous push of the reformer but also depends on the tacit acceptance of reform by those who do not wish to climb the barricades. The university has discovered that its influence is directly proportional to its acceptance of the necessity and wisdom of tacit support and indirect influence.

I hope by now to have shown that while *direct* institutional intervention is a very limited means of social reform, *indirect* influences achieved through the social strategies built into normal university activities can and do play their part in social change. We turn now to a third and even more significant level of influence on social change and social reform—that of professional networks. Here the mode of academic community is dominant and the mode of institution is present but supportive.

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

We have given far too little attention to the professional and his unique role in society. He may be our greatest social invention. He is highly competent in some field of knowledge such as physics, public administration or microbiology. He may be highly competent in some practice that combines a field of knowledge, a set of skills, and special service—such as medicine, architecture or the law. To say that a man is a professional is to say that he is dedicated to his chosen field and performs at the highest level of his capability. Unprofes-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

sional conduct is a term of opprobrium. Professionalism is the modern style and spells success.

A second important characteristic of the professional is that he has a dual loyalty—to his institutional employer and to his profession. A physicist may be a government employee, a university professor, a corporation researcher or a colonel in the air force. But irrespective of his institutional home, he is also a physicist and maintains professional relationships that are as important as his institutional connections. Sometimes these relations are of paramount consideration. Institutions are, in these circumstances, used by a professional network to advance its own programs, standards of performance, and even its idea of the national interest. This stance and capability is not necessarily a bad thing but it can and does sometimes complicate life for the institutional manager.

A real-life illustration will help make my point. One day at Cornell I was waited on by a professor of nuclear physics. The professor informed me, with obvious delight, that Cornell had been selected as the site for the largest campus-based synchrotron in the country. All capital and operating expenses were to be paid by the National Science Foundation. I replied that the honor was indeed great but might I inquire who had made this selection. He replied that a committee made up entirely of nuclear physicists had drawn up a ten-year plan for the development of the field, had sold it to the executive office of the President and the chairman of the relevant committees of the Congress. Anticipating a question hovering in the corner of my eyes, he explained that of course he had not wished to take up my time until the matter was all set. And it was all set because I came to agree that this great machine could be absorbed by the university without irreparable damage and even to some advantage. I will have to confess that it was extremely fortunate that I came to this positive view because I am by

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

no means clear that I could have denied its entrance without a fatal palace revolution.

An additional characteristic of the professional is that national boundaries are as easy to surmount as are the jurisdictions of domestic agencies–public or private. It is perhaps no coincidence that our earliest and most continuous dialogue with the USSR was conceived and manned by scientists and engineers who reached out to their professional counterparts as partners in a discussion of political and social issues. I am told that the main constructive thread throughout this decade of discussions has been the solid agreement that governments must not be allowed to interfere with the growth of science–anywhere. On the contrary, science involves a scale of consideration–be it for a trillion-volt synchrotron or for a mission into space–that requires the active support of more than one government.

These professional links form a network of influence in which the professional on the university campus has his distinctive role. He is the original link in the chain, the source of professional training, the man free from (or largely free from) political or monetary concerns, the bell cow in the professional flock. Given a home by the university, colleagues who can round out his work, freedom to relate to his professional peers at home or abroad, the university supports a revolutionary society whose influence is only matched by its apparent innocence. To simplify the analysis and to make the connection between the professional and the university as an instrument for reform, permit me to include a word or two about the influence of colleges of agriculture in our land-grant universities in the United States.

A series of these universities was established in the United States over one hundred years ago to provide education and training relevant to a growing industrial society. One feature of this program was the application of science to the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

production and distribution of food. To this end there developed a college of agriculture and a college of engineering in almost every state of the union, and these colleges were to house the new professionals ready to forge the links between the laboratory and the farm. A chain of professional connection was gradually established, starting with professors of biology and running to professors of animal husbandry, then to extension professors of applied agriculture, then to county agents trained in the universities, then to local farm groups and finally to the farmer himself. Thus the basic research in the university laboratory could be translated by easy and established stages down an uninterrupted and connected chain of competence. Conversely, the farmers' problems could work their way up the chain to the level that could produce adequate answers. Thus research was visibly relevant and, therefore, supported, and farm productivity became a smashing success.

The land-grant colleges are the important supportive link in the chain that has produced the miracle of agricultural productivity in the United States. In so doing they have freed millions of farm workers formerly needed for the production of food to go into various parts of the growing industrial complex. At the same time they have made possible the food reserves that in times of trouble elsewhere have forestalled famine and even revolution. And, of course, they have incidentally helped to populate our cities and depopulate our rural areas. Finally, they have made agriculture dependent on an increasingly sophisticated technology which has in turn further strengthened the chain of connection and interdependence in society as a whole.

The important point is that professional networks of men trained largely at the university, but now to be found throughout all institutions, public and private, academic and business, with their hands in the soil or around the test tube, have provided dynamic links between theory and practice,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

campus and farm, that significantly helped transform our societies from rural-agricultural to urban-industrial. It may seem strange that it was an agricultural program that gave such a powerful assist to the modern industrial state. But that is the way it was and is.

INFLUENCE OF UNIVERSITY AS A FREE COMMUNITY

The fourth influence of the university stems from its style and nature as a free and semi-autonomous community rather than as a corporate institution. It is the one place–perhaps the only place in society–where ideas, however inspired or foolish, can be expressed freely and exposed to criticism. Consequently, it is a haven for the dissenting, the unpopular, the critical voice. If reform springs from the seed of discontent with what *is*, accompanied by a vision of what *could be*–then surely the university influence for reform is great, for it maintains a community in which a diversity of such visions can openly exist. In this sense, the university is not just the "home of lost causes" but the home of all causes–contradictory though they may be.

The university is also an idealized community. Its activity is removed from the pressures that come from living with the consequences of statements and actions. Thus there is a built-in comparison between the real and ideal world which places the university community in a state of chronic dissatisfaction with the world around it. As a student newspaper editorial put it, "only the young can be truly moral because their values have not been contaminated by experience."

This dissatisfaction can flare up into revolt when the real world departs too far from the ideal and particularly when other critical voices are not to be heard. Thus in authoritarian societies students have frequently been the de facto opposi-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

tion party. In these circumstances student political activity, with the university campus as a base, has not been without influence. Sometimes the campus is the center of the action—demonstrations against unpopular visitors are cases in point. At other times the university administration is the target, or some teacher, or some course of study. But, generally speaking, university confrontation is used as a means of giving visibility to some substantial complaint about the status quo and even some constructive program or project aimed at righting wrongs.

It may be that as the campus becomes a less significant feature of the structure of higher education, the university as a social base for political opposition will be considerably reduced. While life for teachers and administrators may become quieter, it is clear that society as a whole may miss this stimulus for reform.

EDUCATED MAN—MOST POTENT INFLUENCE FOR CHANGE

Finally, we come to the most pervasive influence of the university as an agent for social reform—the development of the educated man. In the long run the educated man is the yeast in our social dough.

The educated man knows that injustice can be reduced because through a reading of history he knows injustice has been both experienced and dealt with in other civilizations. Injustice and justice, he has come to believe, are both man-made.

He has learned the value of objectivity, which protects him from confusing emotional commitment with the truth. But he also knows, in the great phrase of Northrup Frye, that "concern prevents detachment from degenerating into indifference."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

He knows that truth is never the monopoly of any person, any group, any country, or any civilization. He will be ranged against those who make such claims. He is an anti-authoritarian.

He has watched the careful way in which his teachers separated what is from what ought to be. He has appreciated all the more those who make the distinction in order to proclaim allegiance to the great values and great aspirations that have moved all men.

We do not mean that the educated man is necessarily good; educated men and women have frequently put their education to evil uses. Nor do we mean that the educated man is necessarily omniscient. He can be wrong. The educated man may not have the answers but he does have the style that is more likely to produce the answers.

We conclude that the university's greatest instrument for social reform is surely not its institutional muscle but its graduates who will have appreciated a dedication to careful analysis and precise statement; a perspective that comes from a reading of history, an appreciation of other cultures, a love of truth; a mastery of the tools of laboratory and library that help dispel ignorance better than do incantation or dictatorial fiat; and finally, a horizon that embraces a view of what could be, the first prerequisite to social reform.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

International Council for Educational Development

The International Council for Educational Development (ICED) is an international non-profit association of persons with a common concern for the future of education and its role in social and economic development.

ICED's three major interests are strategies for educational development; the modernization and management of systems of higher education; and the international programs and responsibilities of higher education. In each area, ICED's purposes are to identify and analyze major educational problems shared by a number of countries, to generate policy recommendations, and to provide consultation, on request, to international and national organizations.

ICED's activities are directed by James A. Perkins, chief executive officer and chairman of an international board. Philip H. Coombs is vice chairman. The headquarters office is in New York City.

The main support for ICED to date has come from the Ford Foundation, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, UNICEF, and the Clark Foundation.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

*James A. Perkins
Chairman of the Board

*Philip H. Coombs
Vice Chairman of the Board

Abbas M. Ammar
Deputy Director-General
International Labour Office
Geneva, Switzerland

Lord Eric Ashby
Master of Clare College
Cambridge, England

Vincent M. Barnett, Jr.
James Phinney Baxter III
Professor of History and Public Affairs
Williams College
Williamstown, Massachusetts

Harlan Cleveland
President
University of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii

Ricardo Diez Hochleitner
Fundacion General Mediterranea
Madrid, Spain

*Alvin C. Eurich
President
Academy for Educational Development
New York, New York

Robert F. Goheen
Chairman
Council on Foundations
New York, New York

*Edward K. Hamilton
Deputy Mayor
City of New York
New York, New York

Felipe Herrera
Universidad Católica
Universidad de Chile
Santiago, Chile

Torsten Husén
Professor of International Education
University of Stockholm
Stockholm, Sweden

Lady Barbara Ward Jackson
President
International Institute for Environmental Affairs
London, England

Henri Janne
Le Président du Collège Scientifique
Institut de Sociologie
Université Libre de Bruxelles
Brussels, Belgium

Clark Kerr
Chairman
The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education
Berkeley, California

*Max Kohnstamm
President
European Community Institute for University Studies
Brussels, Belgium

Peter F. Krogh
Dean
School of Foreign Service
Georgetown University
Washington, D.C.

Alex A. Kwapong
Vice-Chancellor
University of Ghana
Legon, Ghana

Hans Leussink
Bonn, West Germany

John P. Lewis
Dean
Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

Sol M. Linowitz
Coudert Brothers
Washington, D.C.

Robert S. McNamara
President
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
Washington, D.C.

Martin Meyerson
President
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Michio Nagai
Member
Editorial Board
The Asahi-Shimbun Press
Tokyo, Japan

*Alfonso Ocampo Londoño
Director
Department of Educational Affairs
Organization of American States
Washington, D.C.

Gopalaswami Parthasarathi
Vice-Chancellor
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi, India

*Joseph E. Slater
President
Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies
New York, New York

Jan Szczepanski
Director
Instytut Filozofii
Polska Akademia Nauk
Warsaw, Poland

Puey Ungphakorn
Visiting Professor
Wolfson College
Cambridge, England

*Member of the Executive Committee